

Remarks

A. Status of Claims

This paper amends claim 1. Claims 1-3 remain in this application and are presented for reconsideration.

B. Priority

The Examiner has acknowledged receipt of the certified copy of Canadian Application No. 2,412,425 however, the Examiner notes that Applicant has not filed a proper claim for priority as required by 35 U.S.C. §119(b). Applicant's undersigned representative is in the process of investigating this matter to determine whether the benefits of the benefits of foreign filing date of the Canadian application are desired. If that investigation indicates that such benefits are desired, a proper claim for priority will be prepared and filed, along with the appropriate Petition and fee. Until such investigation is completed, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner continue to treat this application on the substantive merits.

C. Section 102 Rejections

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Tsunoda *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,984,438). In light of the above-detailed amendments to claim 1, and following discussion, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

In accordance with the present invention, pads 18, 20 are made of low friction material are formed to cover substantially the entire opposite faces of guide blocks 12. See, for example, Figs 1-4 and supporting text. Claim 1, the only independent claim in this application has been amended to clarify this feature.

In contrast, in the Tsunoda *et al* reference, low friction ends, for example, ends 3₁₁ and 3₁₂ in Fig. 1: 3₂ in Fig. 3: and 3₃₁ and 3₃₂ in Figs 4 and 5, each occupy less than the entire surface of the opposite faces (for example, faces 4 and 5 in Figs. 1-6).

Thus, the presently claimed invention, as amended, requires pads, formed of low friction resin material, to cover “substantially an entire surface of the respective opposite phase.” This feature is neither disclosed by the Tsunoda *et al.* reference, nor is there any suggestion to modify the Tsunoda *et al.* reference to provide this feature.

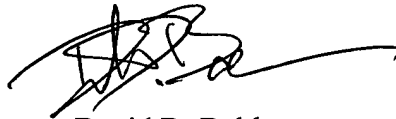
Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to withdraw the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based upon the teachings of the Tsunoda *et al.* reference.

Conclusion

Applicant believes the foregoing to be a full and complete response to the subject Office Action, and respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, and the issuance of a timely Notice of Allowance for these claims.

Should the Examiner believe that a personal discussion would be helpful, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney at 512/536-3005 with any questions, comments or suggestions relating to the referenced patent application.

Respectfully submitted,



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